



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 June 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
24 JUNE 1968

1. South Vietnam

The Buddhists have launched a new peace campaign, with militant and moderate factions vying for the spotlight.

On Saturday, militant leader Thich Tinh Khiet released a statement calling for an immediate cease-fire and castigating the North Vietnamese for the shelling of Saigon. Yesterday the moderates came out with a somewhat similar statement.

This new effort comes at a time when there is increasing discussion among leftist students and politicians about the consequences of continued fighting and the need for a prompt end to the bloodshed. One labor organization, for example, has petitioned Thieu for an end to what is described as careless and indiscriminate allied air and artillery strikes.

2. Canada

The latest polls give Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberal Party some 46 percent of the vote in Tuesday's election. A district-by-district assessment by the embassy, however, shows the Liberals failing narrowly to win a majority and having to continue as a minority government as they have for the past five years.

Trudeau has kept the campaign focused on issues of his choosing--national unity and foreign policy--and has succeeded fairly well in downplaying economic questions on which the Liberals are most vulnerable.

All three major parties support a comprehensive review of Canada's foreign and defense commitments and favor recognition of Communist China.

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3. Uruguay

President Pacheco is finally saying that he will crack down on the labor leaders and other agitators responsible for the current wave of disorders. It is not clear just what he will do, but it is clear that if the government does not move quickly to alleviate the chaotic economic conditions, any measures against the agitators will likely produce more violence.

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4. Spain

Franco and company are showing continuing concern that the political unrest in France and elsewhere may spread their way. Monarchist celebrations planned for last Saturday and for today in a number of Spanish cities were abruptly cancelled. In recent months, the government has been quick to ban meetings that might produce political problems.

5. France

Final tallies just in on the first round of the French elections confirm press reports this morning that De Gaulle has indeed won a strong vote of confidence.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Demonstrations: Vietnamese Communist efforts to promote demonstrations in support of their stand in Paris are paying off. [REDACTED] on 21 June, representatives of the "Stockholm Conference on Vietnam" agreed to organize world-wide demonstrations next month to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Geneva agreements in 1954. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Agricultural Conditions: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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On 3 and 4 June, [REDACTED] the press said that "great efforts were required to remedy the situation" caused by cold weather and prolonged rain. The weather was said to be affecting not only the harvest of the early rice crop, but also the planting of the more important second crop. This same type of article appeared on 10 June. Other press pieces recently have dealt with lack of fertilizers and shortages of manpower.

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Propaganda Emphasizes Defections: The well-publicized defection of nearly 150 Communist troops just north of Saigon on 19 June seems to have hit the Communists where it hurts. The Liberation Front came back almost the next day with a report of 1,200 South Vietnamese troops who had staged a mass desertion in the delta. No specifics on date and place were supplied, and there is no confirmation from other sources. On the 21st, Hanoi radio broadcast a long commentary in English recounting all the alleged defections that had occurred among South Vietnamese troops since the Tet offensive. It represents a rehash of much of the propaganda issued earlier to support Communist claims of extensive popular support for their new front group, the

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National Alliance. Mass desertions of southern units or individuals, particularly in I Corps, were continually reported in the aftermath of the Tet fighting. Although the broadcast of the 21st is more specific on dates, unit designations, and places than the Liberation Front account on the 19th, it is still difficult to confirm. Much of the reported activity is not actual defections but what the commentary calls "mutinies and antiwar activities."

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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